

Personal Academic Support Services

With the huge increase in not only the number of children placed, but the length of their stays, the need for more intensive help for residents' academics was obvious. The Personal Academic Support Services (PASS) program includes a comprehensive array of services to ensure every student at the Youth Shelter has the opportunity to be successful. A qualified tutor who oversees the daily study time and provides homework assistance directs this program. In addition to group study time, students receive one-on-one assistance each evening. The staff maintains contact with teachers and, when necessary, develops supplemental instruction to meet the needs of the individual student. When special needs students require a case conference, the staff is actively involved to ensure appropriate accommodations are provided. As part of the larger education community, PASS staff participates in school district student support programs and policy discussions.

One daily goal of PASS is to provide a supportive environment in which residents can do their best with schoolwork. This is essentially the role a parent usually fills; however, the PASS staff takes on the role for forty parents! The Youth Shelter residents need a structured group study time as well as a process for receiving individual assistance. Other concerns that PASS staff attends to each day are verifying homework completion, communicating with teachers and proactively monitoring school attendance. For students on non-traditional school paths, the PASS staff may be a significant resource. Students attending programs offered through Education Support Services or completing their GED often requires time-management guidance and encouragement to reach their goals.

Examples of the positive impact of PASS are greater participation in homework, fewer failing grades, reduced school absenteeism, successful transition to employment, increased post-high school planning, and enhanced adult living skills (checking account, how to obtain important documents, managing work/life schedule). In addition to providing academic structure and support, PASS creates other types of learning experiences to broaden the residents' world view, foster a desire for learning, and develop an appreciation for the natural, interdependent systems around them. These activities include participation in the Actor's Theatre education series, frequent hikes in nearby State Parks and Forests, sampling different cuisines at area restaurants, attending the Louisville Opera student discount nights, trips to the J.B Speed Art Museum and the Rauch Planetarium, and metalworking demonstrations at Kaviar Forge.